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clean. Unnecessary draperies, carpets, etc., should be dispensed with. If sputum or other discharge accidentally falls on the floor or walls, the spot should be cleaned immediately with boiling water. The rooms and all the furnishings should be thoroughly disinfected as often as once in four weeks at most.

Disinfection.—Disinfection with formaldehyd is recommended. To do this, clean the walls thoroughly by rubbing them down with moist bread crumbs or dough. Then scrub all woodwork thoroughly with carbolic acid solution (5 per cent), or corrosive sublimate solution (1-1000). Close absolutely tight all openings, expose all surfaces as much as possible open all closet doors, remove the contents of the drawers, scatter them about and leave the drawers open. Set mattresses on end, suspend pillows, clothing, bedding, etc., from lines stretched across the room, or spread them out on chairs or other objects so as to expose all sides, open all books and spread out the leaves.

For every 1,000 cubic feet of space in the room and closets, suspend by one edge an ordinary bed sheet (2 by 2½ yards) from a line stretched across the middle of the room. Use as many sheets as are necessary, hanging them at equal distances apart. A coarse cotton sheet is best, because it secures more rapid evaporation. Tie a damp towel over the mouth and nose and begin with the sheet farthest from the door, sprinkling each sheet rapidly on the way out. Five ounces (5 oz.) of formalin—the 40 per cent solution of formaldehyd—should be used for each sheet. The sheets should be evenly sprinkled so they will not drip. The air becomes impregnated in about three minutes, so that quick action is necessary. The hands and wrists should be protected from the spray with rubber gloves. On completing the spraying, the room should be tightly closed and so left for, at least, five hours. Then the room should be freely opened to the fresh air and sunlight, and a little ammonia sprinkled about to neutralize the disagreeable pungency of the gas. Dr. Behm's formaldehyd sprinkler is recommended as a perfectly satisfactory and inexpensive apparatus.

NOTE.—This circular is for free distribution. Copies may be had by applying to the secretary of the State board of health, Denver, Colo.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

The rat as a carrier of plague germs.

NEW ORLEANS, March 20, 1900.

DEAR DOCTOR: Kindly inform me—

- (1) Can rats carry the plague without being affected with it?
- (2) Can they carry the live germs in their fur?
- (3) How long?
- (4) Can they have bacilli in their feces without having the plague?
- (5) Can they carry fleas infected with bacilli without having the plague themselves?

If you can not answer, please tell me who can.

Respectfully,

EDMOND SOUCHON, M. D.,
President Louisiana State Board of Health.

MARCH 30, 1900.

DEAR DOCTOR: Replying to your inquiries of March 20, concerning plague, I have to say—

(1) That, as far as known, rats do not carry the plague without being affected by it.

(2) It is possible to conceive that the germ may be in the fur of a rat and the animal not be sick with the disease. But it is probable that a rat would soon infect itself from this source, on account of their habit of dressing their fur.

(3) The viability of the plague bacillus outside the body is a disputed question. The German plague commission states that the organism will dry out and die in four days. According to experiments in the hygienic laboratory of this Service, the bacillus of plague has been found alive after twenty-one days on a piece of fabric, dried and kept in a cool, dark place. Further work on this line is being carried on.

(4) According to the work of Batzuroff, rats are infected when fed with plague cultures. It is not likely that the organism lives in the intestinal canal of a healthy rat.

(5) It is not positively known that fleas infected with plague may live in a healthy rat without infecting it. In our hygienic laboratory, fleas from plague-sick guinea pigs were found to carry the plague bacillus in virulent form.

Respectfully,

WALTER WYMAN,
Supervising Surgeon-General U. S. M. H. S.

Dr. EDMOND SOUCHON,

President, Louisiana State Board of Health, New Orleans, La.

Preparations against plague at Astoria, Oreg.

COLUMBIA RIVER QUARANTINE,
Astoria, Oreg., March 22, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to report that, since your inquiry of January 18, relative to the precautions and preparation of the local health authorities for possible plague, a city physician has been appointed, an effort has been made to clean up the town, with special attention to the Chinese district, and a bounty of 5 cents per rat offered by the city for every dead rat delivered to the chief of police during the next thirty days.

Respectfully,

HILL HASTINGS,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

Concerning plague suspects at San Francisco.

[Telegram.]

ANGEL ISLAND, CAL., April 2, 1900.

Complete examination of specimens of 3 suspected cases of plague does not show the presence of organism.

KINYOUN,
Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.